

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

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R 150600Z MAY 74

FM AMCONSUL STUTTGART

TO AMEMBASSY BONN

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2041

U.S. MISSION BERLIN 357

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUESSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

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CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG

CINUSEUCOM STUTTGART

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FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJ: BADEN WUERTEMBERG SPD REACTION TO BRANDT RESIGNATION

1. SUMMARY: LAST SEVEN DAYS SINCE BRANDT'S BOMBSHELL
HAVE ADDED TO DISMAY IN LOCAL SPD. UNANSWERED
QUESTIONS ARE WHY BRANDT REALLY RESIGN AND WHAT
ARE PARTY PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE WITHOUT BRANDT? EFFORTS
OF LOCAL LEADERS TO HOLD PARTY DISCIPLINE AND PREVENT
COLLAPSE OF MORALS HAVE BEEN ONLY marginally SUCCESSFUL.
END SUMMARY.

2. SPD IN B/W WAS ALREADY IN DEFENSIVE POSTURE PRIOR
MAY 7. CDU, UNDER MIN PRES FILBINGER, IS IN EYES OF
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ALL BUT WIDLY OPTIMISTIC B/W SPEDERS, UNBEATABLE AND

WITH SPD FORTUNES DECLINING ON NATIONAL GERMAN LEVEL IN LAST SIX MONTHS, DEFEATISM BEGINNING TO BE OBVIOUS. B/W SPD CHAIRMAN EPPLER SEEMED TO BE LOOKING FOR WAY OUT OF HIS LOCAL OFFICE IN ORDER TO AVOID STIGMA OF DEFEAT IN 1976. YOUNGER SPDEERS HAVE BEEN TELLING US FOR SEVERAL MONTHS THAT THEY WERE PLANNING FOR 1980 SINCE 1976 IS "UNINTERESTING" AND EPPLER LEADERSHIP IS "TEMPORARY PHENOMENA" WHICH UNLIKELY TO PRODUCE SPD VICTORY.

3. IN WEEKEND SPD MEETING STUTTGART MAY 10, UNDER CHAIRMANSHIP BUNDESTAG DEPUTY PETER CONRADI, FORMER MINISTER HORST EHMKE AND STATE SECRETARY (TRANSPORT MIN) ERNST HAAR (WHO ALSO REPRESENT STUTTGART DISTRICTS) WERE HARD PRESSED TO CLARIFY BRANDT'S RESIGNATION AND SPD CHANCES FOR FUTURE. THEY WERE NOT VERY SUCCESSFUL. SPD MEMBER'S DOUBTS ABOUT BRANDT'S STATED REASONS FOR RESIGNING ARE GROWING AS PUBLIC ATTEMPTS TO READ BETWEEN THE LINES AND SPD HAS LITTLE TO SAY IN REBUTTAL. SPD MEMBERS THEMSELVES NO DOUBT READY TO ACCEPT BRANDT'S "HIGH MORAL PURPOSES AND INTEGRITY" BUT HIS WORDS RING HOLLOW. SEVERAL DELEGATES PUT BLAME ON GDR AND SED FOR BRANDT'S FALL AND OTHERS SAID SECRET SERVICES, BUSINESS LEADERS, AND CDU WERE GUILTY. THERE WAS NO CONSENSUS.

4. COMMENT: IT IS PROBABLE THAT VAST MAJORITY OF CONSERVATIVE, MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD BADEN-WUERTTEMBERGER WILL EASILY ALLOW INERTIA TO TAKE OVER AND WITH INSTALLATION OF SCHMIDT AND NEW GOVERNMENT, SPOT LIGHT WILL SHIFT TO PRESENT AND AWAY FROM IMMEDIATE PAST.

5. NEVERTHELESS, SPD ITSELF IN B/W HAS LOST MUCH OF ITS OWN LIMITED SUPPLY OF SELF-CONFIDENCE. IN PARTY MEMBER'S EYES, SPD SEEMS TO BE A BORN LOSER AND EVEN IF THEY HAVE THE MAJORITY OF THE ELECTORATE, THEY STILL CAN'T RULE. EFFECTS OF STERN AND SPIEGEL ALLEGATIONS ABOUT WEHNER ROLE NOT MEASURABLE YET. RUCHTI

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